

REMARKS

The above claim amendments are submitted along with the following remarks to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action mailed May 4, 2005. It is further submitted that this response is timely filed within the three month shortened statutory period. Reconsideration of all outstanding grounds of objection and rejection and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner objected to the drawings because reference numeral 25 is not mentioned in the description. In response, paragraph [0018] of the application is amended to include reference numeral 25 as set forth above. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is being introduced.

The abstract was also objected to by the Examiner because of the use of the terms "comprises" and "comprising." A replacement abstract is presented above which has been revised to remove these terms from the abstract. Applicants again respectfully submit that no new matter is being introduced.

The Examiner also objected to claim 17 and rejected claim 22 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, claims 17 and 22 are currently amended to correct inconsistencies in these claims. In this regard, the Examiner's objection to claim 17 and rejection of claim 22 are thus obviated.

Regarding the rejections based on prior art, all of the pending independent claims of the application (1, 22, and 23) as well as dependent claims 7-10, 13-17, and 20 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 5,879,278 to Cox. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the reasons set forth below.

In the Official Action, the Examiner submits that Cox discloses a method of making individual sealing members wherein each sealing member has a base portion and first and second extending tabs. The Examiner relies on column 1, lines 22-24, of the Cox reference as teaching a sealing member with first and second extending tabs. The portion of the Cox reference relied on by the Examiner is in the background section of this reference and only teaches that a sealing member can have one or more extending tabs. The fact that a sealing member can have one or more extending tabs is known and also noted in the background section of the present application. Significantly, however,

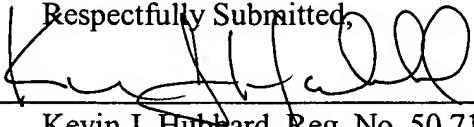
the Cox reference does not discuss or suggest any aspect of a manufacturing method that involves relative positioning of sealing members having extending tabs, as required by the present claims. Specifically, the Cox reference does not teach or suggest a method of making a plurality of sealing members having first and second extending tabs having the presently claimed positional relationship. The Examiner notes that Cox does not teach the position of the tabs and asserts that it would have been obvious to “position the sealing members so that the tabs and base portions are not touching in order to maximize space while creating a complete seal.” Even if one did position sealing members so that the tabs and base portions are not touching, this does not arrive at the presently claimed invention. An important aspect of these claims is still missing. Presently pending independent claims 1, 22, and 23 require an arrangement where an extending tab of one sealing member extends into a space between the base portion of a second and third sealing member. Simply positioning sealing members so that the tabs and base portions are not touching is not sufficient to meet this limitation. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 22, and 23 and the dependent claims thereof cannot be unpatentable as obvious in view of the Cox reference. Withdrawal of the rejection of record is thus respectfully requested.

The remaining pending dependent claims are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of one of US Patent 3,206,017 to Williams, US Patent 4,960,216 to Giles et al., and US Patent 4,095,390 to Knudsen. Applicants respectfully submit that these dependent claims are patentable at least in that they depend from one of independent claims 1, 22, and 23, which are believed patentable over the prior art of record as discussed above. Moreover, none of the Williams, Giles et al., and Knudsen references cure the basic deficiency of the primary reference to Cox regarding the presently claimed positional relationship. Applicants therefore respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of record as to these claims.

Accordingly, it is submitted that presently pending claims 1-23 are currently in condition for allowance, a notice of which is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, at the Examiner’s convenience, should the Examiner have any questions regarding this communication or the present patent application.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Kagan Binder deposit account No. 50-1775 and notify us of the same.

Dated: August 4, 2005

Respectfully Submitted,
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